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OPINION

'Blessings of Liberty' Only for White People

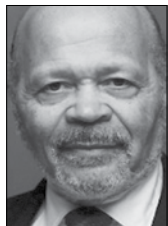
Trump's gatekeeper closes doors to people of color

BY OSCAR H. BLAYTON

There is a sickening stench about Ken Cuccinelli.

Ken Cuccinelli is Donald Trump's newly appointed acting director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and his type of stench is not one that assaults the nose, rather it is a noxious affront that assaults one's dignity.

Cuccinelli's main function in his new position is to act as Donald Trump's gatekeeper to bar America's doors to people of color. His job description requires a belief in the notion that America is a land for white prosperity and



Statue of Liberty welcomes "your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Oblivious to the meaning of the words of the poem inscribed on the plaque at the base of the great statue, Cuccinelli insisted that their intent was "Give me your tired and your poor who can stand on their own two feet, and who will not become a public charge."

When asked to explain his revised version of the famous poem, Cuccinelli said, in essence, the poem was meant for white people. In his words: "That poem was referring back to people coming from Europe..."

Cuccinelli's remark gives proof to the fact that white supremacy can only flourish when fertilized with the manure of bigoted ignorance.

The Statue of Liberty was conceived by Édouard René de Laboulaye of France to com-

memorate the end of slavery in the United States. The original concept was to have Lady Liberty holding a broken shackle and chain in her left hand. But due to powerful Americans objecting to this reference to slavery, the final version of the statue replaced the chains with a tablet inscribed with "July IV MDCCLXXVI," the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and placed the broken chains beneath her feet.

By the time the statue was installed in New York Harbor in 1886, Reconstruction in the South was over, and America had turned its back on the plight of African Americans suffering from injus-

justice and oppression. Little, if any, reference was made at that time to the anti-slavery message of the statue. By then, America had moved so far away from being concerned about the welfare of African Americans.

Despite Cuccinelli's assertions, Ellis Island did not officially open as an immigration station until Jan. 1, 1892. And the words of Emma Lazarus' famous poem were not placed on the base of the statue until 1903 – 17 years after the Statue of Liberty was unveiled.

Given the history of this country, it is not difficult to understand why Cuccinelli believes America is reserved for white people and the Statue of Liberty was meant only for them. But we must al-

ways keep in mind that people like Ken Cuccinelli drag this nation further into the mire of despotism as they seek the "blessings of liberty" only for themselves and those who look like them.

Cuccinelli's political path includes election to the Virginia state senate beginning in 2002 and as Virginia attorney general in 2009. During his career, he tried to eliminate birthright citizenship, proposed making it a firing offense to speak Spanish on the job and distributed lapel pins to his staff at the Attorney General's Office that were decorated with a state seal adopted by Virginia and used on Confederate battle flags after the state seceded from the Union in 1861.

The stench of bigotry envel-

oping Ken Cuccinelli is so strong that, according to reports, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell advised Donald Trump not to nominate him for any post that requires Senate confirmation. To this day, Cuccinelli remains acting director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, holding that office without Senate confirmation.

I have been exposed to the stench of racism and bigotry all my life, and as a Virginian, I have endured Ken Cuccinelli's stench for almost two decades. Now, thanks to Donald Trump, all America is experiencing that stench as well.

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any non-white presence – if not of service to white supremacy – is a trespass.

The Trump Administration recently came under fire when Cuccinelli announced that it would implement its "public-charge rule," declaring that anyone seeking immigration to the United States would be deemed undesirable if they could not satisfactorily prove their self-sufficiency – the effect being to bar poor people.

Some commentators have described this rule as Draconian and point out that it would have barred Cuccinelli's poor ancestors from entering America as well. And one reporter reminded him that the

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